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AN

Assize-Sermon,

Preach'd at St. *Edmunds-Bury* in *Suffolk*, *March* the 23*d*, $169\frac{6}{7}$.

Before the Right Honourable

Sir *JOHN HOLT*, Knight,

Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench;

AND

JOHN PACKE Esq;

High Sheriff for the County.

By *Thomas Knaggs*, M. A. and Chaplain to the Right Honourable FORD Earl of *Tankerville*.

LONDON;
Printed for *Jonas Luntley* at the three Bibles in Little *Lincolns-Inn-fields*, near the Play-house. MDCXCVII.

Dr. *WAUGH*'s
SERMON
AT THE
CONSECRATION
OF THE
Lord Biſhop of St. *DAVID*'s.

To the Right Honourable

Sir JOHN HOLT Kt.

Lord Chief Juſtice of His Majeſty's Court of King's Bench;

And one of his Majeſty's Moſt Honourable Privy Council.

May it pleaſe your Lordſhip;

AS I had the Honour to preach this Sermon before you, ſo I have your Lordſhip's Command for the printing it; in Obedience to which I have expoſed it to the Publick. I ſhall not in the leaſt be troubled at any Cenſure I may bring upon my ſelf by its Publication: Your Lordſhip's Approbation alone is enough to ſhield me without any Vindication or Apology. It was for the Sake of the Common Good I penn'd it. For alas! We are fallen into ſuch deplorable times, that Con-

ſcience *is almoſt baniſh'd out of the World. Such an Age of Licentiouſneſs and Profaneneſs we live in, and therefore never was there more neceſſity of preſſing Motives to prevail with Men to a Love and Veneration of Truth and common Honeſty as now.*

My Lord;

All that I ſhall ſay of that Excellent Charge of your Lordſhip's to the Grand Jury, is, that it was enough to perſwade and convince any rational Man to ſtand faſt for the Preſervation of the Preſent Government, for which you truly deſerve the Name of an Engliſhman *and a* Proteſtant. *All ſuch have a particular Value for your Lordſhip, but none more than*

Your Lordſhip's moſt Humble
and moſt Obedient Servant,

Tho. Knaggs.

ACTS xxiv. 16.

And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man.

ST. *Paul* having been accuſed before *Felix* the Governour by *Tertullus* and ſeveral others of the Jews, was by them repreſented as a dangerous Perſon, *a peſtilent Fellow, a Mover of Sedition, a great Promoter of the Religion of the Nazarens*, and *a Profaner of the Temple*. Theſe were the hainous Crimes he ſtood accuſed of; but being to anſwer for himſelf, before his Judg he declared his Innocency, and that he was not in the leaſt guilty of what they laid to his Charge, and that they were not able to prove the things whereof they accuſed him, giving *Felix* a Confeſſion of his Faith: *And have*

Hope

Hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. This was the Sum of that Apostle's Faith and Hope. *Herein*, i. e. in a real Belief of the Resurrection and the last Judgment, *do I exercise my self to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man.*

In discoursing of which Words I shall consider,

I. What Conscience is.
II. Wherein a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man, doth chiefly consist.
III. The Advantages that will accrue by keeping such a Conscience.
IV. Shall lay down several Inducements for the keeping such a Conscience.
Lastly, Shall conclude with some Rules for your Help and Direction herein. And,

I. What Conscience is.

In every Man there is a Soul, and in every Soul a Deputy-Judg, we call the Conscien[illegible]

This

This is that Faculty by which a Man becomes conscious to himself of all that he hath either done or design'd. This examines, sifts, and tries our Actions. 'Tis a Spy upon them, an exact Notary of whatever we think or act; and 'tis called by St. *Paul* a Co-witness with God, *Rom.* 9. 1. Next under God himself, who is the supream Judg, this, as the Almighty's Vicegerent, exerciseth a Soveraign Power in every Man's own Breast, calling him to the Bar, and arraigning him; and being the Register, Witness, and Judg of all his Thoughts, Words, and Actions, sits upon him, and upon Examination either accuseth, or else excuseth, acquits, or condemns him. This of all other things has the most irresistable Influence upon every Man's Happiness or Misery; for according as Conscience is either for him or against him, so he hath Boldness or Fear in time of Life, and in the Hour of Death. The Horrours that naturally arise out of an accusing Conscience, such as Frights and Distraction, Anguish and Despair, Grief and Fear, Lashes and Gripes, as they cruelly vex and torment the Mind; so on the other side, the Delight and Joy, the Plea-

ſure and Satisfaction, the Peace and Quietneſs that follow upon the Diſcharge of an honeſt and upright one, abide for ever, and accompany both Life and Death with Tranquillity and Reſt of Spirit. I come

II. To conſider wherein a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Man doth chiefly conſiſt. And,

1. To keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, we muſt with *Zacharie* and *Elizabeth* be righteous before him, *walking in all the Commandments, and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs*, Luke 1. 6. Our Piety towards God muſt be conſtant. We muſt be ſerious in all our Addreſſes to him, uniform in our Obedience, and as much as in us lie, endeavour to copy out in our Lives that Holineſs, Juſtice, and Innocency, which in his holy Word he commands.

2. To keep a Conſcience void of offence towards God, we muſt love and fear him, walk in his holy Ways, do what he has commanded, and abſtain from what he has prohibited.

3. To keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards

wards God, we must be free from all Appearances of Hypocrisy and Insincerity, diligent and faithful in our Pursuits of Heaven and Eternity, and live up to the constant and Spiritual Performance of those indispensable Duties.

I come to shew wherein the keeping a Conscience void of Offence towards Man, doth chiefly consist, And,

1. It consists in being just and honest in all our Dealings, in being innocent and candid in our Conversation with him, charitable, and merciful to him, and to offer no Wrong either to his Name, Goods, or Person.

2. He that would keep a Conscience void of Offence towards Man, in his Words and Discourses must speak the Truth in his Heart to him. His Thoughts, Words and Actions must be all of a piece. Who has no by, corrupt, sinister Designs, but walks in the plain and beaten Paths of Righteousness and Integrity.

3. He that would keep a Conscience void of Offence towards Man, must in his Dealings with him lay aside all cunning Practices of Guile and Hypocrisy, all secret Arts and base Tricks, and be mov'd to his Duty by fair Means and Ways.

He that observes these Rules, shall keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man; and at the great Day of Account, when the eternal Retributions shall be adjusted to Men according to their Works, then God will confirm the Sentence of his Conscience, reward him for what he has done, and in the Presence of Men and Angels own him, as a faithful Servant, and bid him enter into the Joy of his Lord.

III. I proceed to shew the Advantages that will accrue by keeping such a Conscience.

It makes the Heart sincere and upright, sets these Duties of Integrity and Honesty, Righteousness and Justice, close upon the Soul, and is its Counsellor, Guide, and Director. The constant keeping such a Conscience makes good Men, whether in publick or private Stations. The Magistrate being appointed by the great Judg of his Conscience to punish evil Doers, and encourage such as do well; he therefore will not, because he knows 'tis a Violation of his Conscience, either protect the Guilty, or oppress the Innocent. This makes him just and

and impartial in the Diſcharge of his Truſt, always prevails with him to advance Righteouſneſs and Juſtice, to deal fairly between Party and Party, and to take care that the poor Man's Cauſe have as friendly and favourable a hearing as that of the Rich. The keeping a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Man, will make the Judg b⁹ e no reſpect of Perſons in Judgment, and put him upon nothing but what is for his Eſteem and Veneration, his Honour and Reputation.

And as the Magiſtrate in particular, by keeping a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Man, has this Advantage by it, that it always prevails with him to do Juſtice, and to denounce righteous Judgment; ſo it has the ſame Influence on Bodies and Societies of Men, and habituates them to the faithful Diſcharge of that Truſt which is repoſed in them.

The Senſe of ſuch a Conſcience makes faithful and true Witneſſes, upright and unbiaſs'd Juries, charitable Plaintiffs and Defendants, and puts Men out of love with vexatious Suits, and the things that make not for Peace. Let us all ſtrive after ſuch a Conſcience. Such a one is the only

only wiſe, great, and ſecure Man, the trueſt Politician, and none ſo ſafe as he. Thoſe two Philoſophers *Plato* and *Ariſtotle* could tell us that a Man that acts from the Spring of a good Conſcience, is τετράγωνος, *like a Die*; caſt him which way you will, he ſtill finds a Bottom. Like his God, he is ſtill the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever. His firſt Principle is to have honeſt Principles, whether in a publick or private Station. 'Tis a memorable Story of *Conſtantius*, who at his firſt coming to the Empire, commanded all his Nobles and Servants to offer Sacrifice unto Idols, threatning to baniſh all from his Court and Service that ſhould refuſe to obey him in that Edict. Many were eaſily induc'd to diſpenſe with their Conſciences; and rather than hazard the Loſs of their Places at Court, would content themſelves to be of any, or no Religion: But others chooſing rather to obey God than Man, would not yield Obedience to ſo wicked an Edict. The good Emperor retain'd theſe about him, and baniſh'd all the others who were ſo forward to embrace Idolatry, ſaying, *Quomodo fidem inviolatam præſtabunt Imperatori, qui Deo ſunt perfidi? What Loyalty and Allegiance can there be expected from them*

them towards their Soveraign, that were so perfidious to their God?

But tho I have insisted hitherto wherein a Conscience void of offence towards God and towards Man doth chiefly consist, and shewn the Advantages that will accrue by keeping such a Conscience; yet what I have delivered has not been to countenance the Practices of such Men, who out of a tender Conscience, as they pretend, have pleaded for the most unconscionable Actions. What shall we think of their Consciences, who dare not for their Lives taste Flesh in *Lent*, stand cover'd before the Picture of our *Lady*, or receive the Eucharist, omitting *Auricular* Confession; and yet stick not to venture upon the most abominable Treasons, to commit horrid Murders, to Assassinate Kings, to undermine States, and involve Kingdoms in Blood and Confusion? What shall we say of their Consciences, who have a seeming Zeal for the Church of *England*, and yet take direct Ways and Means for bringing in *Popery*, *Slavery*, and *Tyranny*? Or what shall we think of their Consciences, who endeavour to make the World sensible of their Love for the common Good, and yet are Enemies to a *Prince* that

that has preserv'd their *Liberties* and *Properties*, and by his Courage and Conduct sav'd *Europe*? A *Prince* whom God rais'd up in the day of our distress to work a Deliverance for us, and to advance the Honour of this Nation to its antient Splendour and Glory. Would some Men but think or consider, they would not be drawn they know not whither, or be so solicitous to compleat the Ruin and Destruction of their Country, and expose it to the Revenge of an incens'd Enemy to our Religion, Laws, and Liberties. The old *Romans* were ready to sacrifice their Fortunes for the Safety of their Country, and were neither afraid nor asham'd to die in so glorious a Cause. How then are some *Englishmen* degenerated from antient Worth and Honour, in seeking to betray what the others were so zealous to preserve? This is one of the worst kind of Consciences in the World. A Conscience that strains at a Gnat, and swallows a Camel. A Conscience that has a hot and flaming Zeal for the *Church*, yet at the same time carries on the Interest of him who for many Years has been endeavouring to establish Popery and Arbitrary Government. A *squinting* Conscience that looks one way,

way, and ſees another. But as much as it looks awry, ſuch are the Conſciences of too many, *I ſpeak it to their Shame.* I come,

IV. To lay down ſeveral Inducements for the keeping a Conſcience void of offence towards God and towards Man.

1. From that Peace and Tranquillity of Mind that follow upon the keeping ſuch a Conſcience. *Solomon* tells us that the *righteous Man's Heart is a continual Feaſt*, Prov. 15. The Man who carries a clean Conſcience about with him, marcheth every where with an Head lifted up: his Heart rejoiceth in an undiſturbed Serenity of Mind. Whether he ſleepeth or waketh, he has quiet Reſt. His Soul being free from all notorious Crimes, he fears no ill Tidings, but is as bold as a Lion. St. *Paul* made ſo great an Account of the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, that he call'd it his *Glory.* O the Comfort a good Conſcience will afford us while we live, and when we come to die! O the internal Conſolation that Soul feels, who has made Piety and Godlineſs the Scope of all its doings! Such a Conſcience chears a Man in Life, and ſpeaks comfortable things to him at his

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Death. It is a ſure Teſtimony of a ſecure Mind here, and eternal Happineſs hereafter. Nothing can be conceiv'd more pregnant with Delight and Joy than a peaceful Conſcience. There is no Chearfulneſs like the Effect of that. That is the Man who is eſtabliſh'd in the Poſſeſſion of inviolable Pleaſure and Satisfaction. It was the Counſel of the *Divine* Philoſopher, *If thou wouldſt live without Fear, live without Offence.* And King *Ptolomy* having ask'd one of the Hebrew Interpreters how he might be at reſt when he ſlept, receiv'd this Anſwer, *Let Piety and righteous Dealing be the Scope of all thy Sayings and Doings; for by applying all thy Diſcourſes and Works to ſuch excellent Ends, whether thou ſleepeſt or wakeſt, thou ſhalt have quieſt Reſt in regard of thy ſelf.* And as one Inducement for the keeping a Conſcience void of offence towards God and Man, is taken from that Peace and Tranquillity of Mind that follow upon the keeping ſuch a Conſcience: So,

2. Another Inducement ſhall be taken from the Remorſes that attend an evil one. That cruel Emperor *Caligula* was continually terrify'd and in fear, and never had ſecure and quiet reſt. *Nero* after he had kill'd his Mother, confeſs'd that whilſt he

he ſlept he was troubled by her, and tormented with Furies as Revengers of that Sin. Thus it was with *Adam* and his Conſcience; for when the Lord call'd unto him and ſaid, *Adam, where art thou?* He anſwered, *I heard thy Voice in the Garden, and was afraid, becauſe I was naked.* But who was it told him he was naked? no other ſurely but his own Conſcience. This remembred him of the Law he had broke, the Penalty of Death he had incur'd thereby, and how he had expos'd himſelf to God's Diſpleaſure, and therefore hid himſelf from the Preſence of the Lord. I could inſtance in *Cain, Saul, Judas, Felix,* and ſuch like, which the Scripture mentions, who had a Worm that gnaw'd their Conſciences both day and night. What Creature can be imagin'd more miſerable than a Man whoſe Life is accompanied with the ſecret Laſhes and Tortures of a guilty Conſcience? What Shame and Confuſion, what Frights and Anguiſhes, and what Terrors and Fears within his Breaſt, whilſt he is awake? and in his Dreams he is diſturb'd with the like Perturbations. Such is the Cuſtom of an evil Conſcience, that the Man that has it even trembles at the fall of a Leaf from a Tree. His own Shadow is a Terror to him, any unuſual Noiſe

terrifies him, and every Man that cometh towards him he ſuſpects as coming againſt him. Like *Etna* he has in his very Bowels the Fire that conſumes him. The Conſcience of a wicked Man (ſaith *Juſtin Martyr*) is unto him inſtead of an Accuſer, a Witneſs, a Judg, and an Executioner. It will be his Witneſs to accuſe him, his Judg to condemn him, and his Executioner to torture him. And is not that a dreadful Puniſhment, when a Man ſhall become his own Accuſer, Judg, and Executioner? Holy *Job* in his 15*th* Chap. has given a lively Deſcription of the miſerable State of ſuch a Man. *The wicked Man travelleth with Pain all his Days, and the Number of Years is hidden to the Oppreſſor. A dreadful Sound is in his Ears, in Proſperity the Deſtroyer ſhall come upon him. He believes not, he ſhall return out of Darkneſs, and he is waited for of the Sword. He wandreth abroad for Bread, ſaying, Where is it? He knows that the Day of Darkneſs is at hand. Trouble and Anguiſh ſhall make him afraid, they ſhall prevail againſt him as a King ready to Battel.* A guilty Conſcience is ſtill imagining terrible things to be coming upon it ſelf. It knows what it deſerves, and therefore is holden in continual fear, and always tormented

mented within it ſelf. 'Tis againſt a Man whilſt he lives, and againſt him when he comes to die.

3. Another Inducement to keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Man, is, we muſt all of us one day bid adieu to the World, and then it will be found that the beſt Pillow to lay a dying Head on, will be a good Conſcience. When our Breath is juſt going from us, and our Souls ready to take their Flight from our trembling Lips; when Death is ſummoning us to give up our Accounts to the great Auditor of the World, then all the Pomp and Glories of the Earth will be but weak Cordials, and afford but ſmall Comfort to him who dies with an accuſing Conſcience ſtaring him in the Face. If we would put our ſelves into a good Poſture of dying, we muſt take care to obſerve thoſe Commands of St. *Paul*; That our *Hearts be ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience*, Heb. 10. 22. To *hold Faith and a good Conſcience*, 1 Tim. 1. 19. *To live in all good Conſcience*, and to *keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Man.* If we expect to die in Peace, and go off the Stage of the World with Joy and Comfort, we muſt have nothing to do with

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any thing that our Conſcience either condemns us in, or for. The more ſpotleſs and blameleſs our Conſciences are, the more prepared we are to look Death in the Face. For a Man to talk of Death, and make Preparation for it, and yet not to diſcharge his Conſcience of all the Remains of its paſt Guilt, is the greateſt Folly and Preſumption in the World. They and they only, who diſcharge a good Conſcience while they live, are thoſe who will be found prepar'd to die.

4. Another Inducement for the keeping a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Man, ſhall be taken from the Conſideration of the general Reſurrection, and the laſt Judgment. There will be a Day when all that are in their Graves ſhall come forth and appear before an impartial Judg, to receive their Doom. The Court ſhall be called, and the Books opened, not only of guilty Conſciences, but alſo the Book of Life, wherein God himſelf has written with his own Finger all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions. The Dead, ſmall and great, ſhall be judged out of thoſe things which are written in the Books, according to their Works; and *whoſoever is not found written*

ten in the Book of Life, ſhall be caſt into the Lake of Fire, Rev. 20. Which way will the Man who has a condemning Conſcience at that Day look, when he ſtands forth and makes his Appearance before the great Tribunal at the *general Aſſize* holden for the whole World? If he looks upwards, there ſits his Judg ready to paſs an unrepealable Sentence upon him. If he caſts his Eyes downwards, there ſtands his Accuſer beneath him; his Conſcience alſo at the ſame time from within crying out and witneſſing againſt him. It will be in vain then to plead not guilty; for his own Iniquities ſhall convince him to the Face. O that Men were wiſe to conſider this, and that they would live in the Fear of that Day, when the Trumpet ſhall ſound the Call, *Ariſe ye Dead and come to Judgment!* What dreadful Impreſſions ſhould the Proceedings at that day make upon our Lives, to do the thing that is lawful and right? A ſerious Reflection upon an Eternity of Miſery, accompanied with all the Horrours and Pangs that that Day writes upon the Forehead of an evil Conſcience, if duly weighed and conſidered, would prove a powerful Motive to perſwade us to the Diſcharge of a good Conſcience. If

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the Man who has deſtroyed the Widow and the Fatherleſs by Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, and is become fat with Frauds and Wrongs, would but think ſeriouſly on the general Reſurrection, and the laſt Judgment, he would be now of the ſame Mind as he will be when he ſhall ſee the Heavens paſs away with a Noiſe, and the Elements melt with fervent Heat; the Earth alſo, and the Works that are therein be burnt up. The Ways of Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, and Extortion, how gainful and pleaſant ſoever they appear here, do not deſerve to be bought with the dear Purchaſe of endleſs Miſery hereafter; for whoever buys them ſo, will find that at the great Day of Account he has a very hard and ſad Bargain. There is nothing cover'd that ſhall not then be revealed, nor hid that ſhall not then be made known. What an Obligation do we lie under to make a diligent Inſpection into our Conſciences, to be nice and curious in examining our Lives and Converſations, to ſet that right which is amiſs, and to haſten out of an evil Frame into one that is good and gracious? This was St. *Paul's* great Care and Exerciſe. The Belief and Hope of a general Reſurrection, and

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the Judgment that is to follow upon it, did strongly oblige and bind that Apostle's Conscience to Vertue and Goodness, to Purity and Holiness, to Honesty and Uprightness, insomuch that he kept always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man.

5. Another Inducement for the keeping such a Conscience, is; The very Conscience, were there nothing else, of doing well, and being imployed in so blessed an Exercise, is it self a brave Reward. Was there nothing to be expected beyond the Grave: Was there no Life after this: Was the Soul not to survive the Body: And were the Resurrection, and a Judgment to come, mere Fables, yet the Ease and Comfort, the Joy and Peace, the Delight and Pleasure, and that inward Contentment, which a universal and exact Conscientiousness begets in vertuous Men, will make them abundant Recompence for all that upright Conversation it puts them upon. If a Man would consult his own Happiness, and be blessed with a quiet and comfortable Life, let it be his Care to tie up himself to an exact Conscientiousness, which will contribute very much to his convenient living in this World.

And now discern between the Righteous and the Wicked. What an excellent Temper of Spirit ariseth from the Minds of those that have kept a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man? They can appeal to God with Confidence, and say with good *Hezekiah*, *Lord, remember that I have walked before thee with an upright Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight*, Isa. 38. 3. None shall be able to lay any thing to their Charge; they have God to justify them, and their own Consciences to acquit them, and therefore they live quietly, sleep in Peace, and die with Comfort. On the contrary, how full of Fears are the Minds of those that are troubled with an evil Conscience? They walk with perplexing Thoughts, their Repose in the Night is uneasy, they are possest with the frightful Appearances of Ghosts, and pursued by the same. Ponder on these things, I beseech you; a good Conscience is necessary to Happiness, it will prepare us for it, and bring us unto it. The more exact we are in our Religion towards God, and in our Conversation among Men, the more we are prepared for Death and Judgment. This was that which St. *Paul* aimed

at,

at, to live in all Purity before God, and in Righteouſneſs among Men; and that Work and Imployment of his was conſtant, *always*: A Vein and a Tincture of theſe ran through all he did; his civil as well as religious Actions were influenced by them, admitting of not the leaſt Taint of Defilement at any time whatſoever. 'Tis uſual with Men, when they are caſt upon a Bed of Sickneſs, and the Viſions of Death and the Grave are before them, then to make Conſcience of their Ways, to dedicate themſelves to God, and to be open and fair in their Dealings with Men; the Apprehenſion of Death puts them upon Devotion, Religion towards God, as well as Integrity towards Men. When they ſee they muſt die, and appear before a righteous Tribunal, to have their everlaſting State and Condition determined, then they are for doing nothing but what Conſcience ſhall approve of, and what that ſhall witneſs. Now St. *Paul* acted more wiſely; in all things and at all times, in Health as well as in Sickneſs, and in the time of Life as well as in the Hour of Death, he laboured to have a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Man. That Apoſtle was not

conſcientious in his Dealings by Fits and Starts, but lived always in the ſame Frame, and was continually in the ſame Poſture: One Part of his Life did not claſh with the other. His Converſation was in Heaven every Day, and kept a holy Intercourſe with God from time to time. He that would live and die in all good Conſcience, muſt be regulated by it in the Shop as well as in the Church; be as juſt at the *Bar* as at the *Altar*; and have as great a Veneration for the *Ten Commandments* as his Creed. That you may be ſerious in that Exerciſe, I ſhall

Laſtly, Lay down ſome Rules for your Help and Direction therein. And,

1. To the happy Diſcharge of your Conſciences towards God and Man, ye muſt endeavour for Holineſs of Life, and Purity of Heart. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs*; 2 Pet. 3. 14. The more ſpotleſs and blameleſs we are in our Ways, and the more we breathe after a Principle of Holineſs and Purity, the more our Induſtry and Study will be to keep a Conſcience void of Offence. An unholy and impure Soul will not walk with

with God, but lives and allows it ſelf in Ways and Haunts of ſinning, indulging this and the other unconſcionable Action. And therefore St. *Paul* prays in behalf of the *Theſſalonians*, *And the Lord make you to abound and increaſe in Love one towards another, and towards all Men, even as we do towards you, to the end he may eſtabliſh your Hearts unblameable in Holineſs before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all his Saints*, 1 Theſſ. 3. 12, 13. Our Hearts and Affections muſt be pure and holy within, as well as our Lives and Converſations without, if we would be owners of a good Conſcience.

2. If we would keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Man, we muſt have a deep Senſe of God's Omnipreſence and Omniſcience, and ſet the Lord always before us. I know nothing that would conduce more to the infuſing a Spirit of exact Conſcientiouſneſs into us, than the Conſideration of thoſe two Attributes. Who would dare to take a falſe Oath, ſmite his Neighbour ſecretly, ſteal his Goods, or do an ill thing, if he conſider'd that every Creature is manifeſt in his ſight, and that God has his Eye continually upon him? *All things are naked and open*

unto

unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do, Heb. 4. 13. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places that I ſhall not ſee him? ſaith the Lord*, Jer. 23. 24. *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth?* The Darkneſs and the Light to him are both alike. There is no hiding nor keeping a wicked thing from the Lord. He that lives under the conſideration of God's Omnipreſence and Omniſcience, will exerciſe himſelf to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Man. And the rather, becauſe,

3. He who overlooks him in all he does in this Life, will be his Judg in the next. And is not this a ſtrong Motive to keep a Conſcience void of Offence? We had need look to our ways, live blameleſly, and preſs after a univerſal Conſcientiouſneſs, that have to deal with a Judg who is to conclude our everlaſting State, whether it ſhall be for Happineſs or Miſery. O of what great Concern is this, when we are to be try'd for Eternity, and appear before a Judg who is then to paſs an eternal Sentence upon us! O the Benefit then of a good Conſcience! Without that no Man ſhall be able to ſtand in Judgment. They ſhall quake and tremble, and cry out to the Moun-

Mountains, *O fall upon us, and to the Hills, O cover us from the Preſence of him that ſits upon the Throne.* But this ſhall be in vain, for the great Day of the Almighty's Wrath is come, and they as guilty muſt feel the dreadful Effects of it.

Laſtly, To keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Man, it will be highly requiſite frequently to meditate upon the Uncertainty of your Lives, and the ſhortneſs of them. In the midſt of Life we are in Death. *Man is like to Vanity, his Days are as a Shadow that paſſeth away, a Vapour that appears for a little time, and is gone.* Now if our Days be few, and they uncertain, how ſhould that Conſideration put us forward with all our might, to live in all good Conſcience? If Death ſurpriſeth us in a guilty Conſcience, it leaves us under an Impoſſibility of ever wiping it off. And therefore it concerns us, as much as our everlaſting Intereſt amounts to, to uſe all preſent Care and Diligence to diſcharge a good Conſcience both towards God and Men. In that bleſſed Diſpoſition let all of us live, that ſo we may neither be afraid nor aſham'd to die; and *having our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience,* we may depart in Peace, cloſe our Eyes with Joy and Confidence,

sence, and fall asleep in hopes of a glorious Resurrection at the last Day. Which that we may all do, God grant for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

FINIS.